

Meeting Notes
North Delta Agency Team
September 10, 2002

The following provides a summary of the North Delta Agency Team Meeting held on September 10, 2002. The group agreed to meet again on **November 5, 2002, 9:30 - 11:30, at Jones & Stokes' 19th Street Office (2125 19th Street).**

Attendees:

Gwen Knittweis - DWR	Collette Zemitis - DWR
Aimee Dour-Smith - J&S	Ron Ott - CALFED
Jeannie Blakeslee - DOC/DCRP	Suzanne DeLeon - DFG
Sue Stack - CALFED	April Zohn - J&S

Members Invited but not Present:

Rosalie Del Rosario - NMFS	Shelby McCoy - RWQCB
Evelyne Gulli - SLC	Chris Kimball - DWR
Carl Werder - USBR	Paul Bowers - USACE
Chuck Vogelsang - CALFED	Sara Martin - J&S
Ken Trott - CDFA	Margit Aramburu - DPC
Ryan Olah - USFWS	Bellory Fong - CALFED
Frank Wernette - DFG	Dennis O'Bryant - DOC
John Thomson - USFWS	Doug Morrison - USFWS
Mike Aceituno - NMFS	Tony Frisbee - CALFED
Diane Windham - NMFS	Terry Mills - CALFED
Pete Rabbon - DWR/Rec Board	Steve Shaffer - CDFA
Dennis Majors - CALFED	Rod Johnson - CALFED
Craig Stevens - J&S	Jim Starr - DFG
Kathy Dadey - EPA	Matthew Reischman - CVRWQCB
Marina Brand - DFG	Mike Jewel - USACE
Travis Hemmen - J&S	Jeff Stuart - NMFS
Laura Fujii - EPA	Mike Coleman - CALFED
Mike Finan - USACE	Patricia Fernandez - CALFED
Scott Cantrell - DFG	

Handouts:

- Previous Meeting Minutes
- Revised NDIP Purpose and Need Statement
- Draft EIR/EIS Outline

Notes:

I. Project Update

Gwen Knittweis and Aimee Dour-Smith provided the NDAT with an update on the status of the project's **federal lead agency**. DWR is still working with USACE planning to find a way to include NDIP in their ongoing, approved feasibility study, the Delta Special Study, which would greatly reduce the timeline associated with their assuming the role of federal lead agency. DWR is hoping that the details of the partnership will be in place by November/December of 2002 to allow USACE planning to participate in the scheduled scoping meetings for the EIR/EIS. If the final determination on the federal lead agency has not been made at the time of the scoping meetings, DWR intends to proceed with the EIR, but will draft a CEQA document that is NEPA "friendly", allowing the appropriate agency to adopt the environmental document when they assume the role of federal lead. NDAT team members also considered how the project proceeding without a federal lead agency may affect specific permitting requirements, such as consultations under the federal Endangered Species Act. In general, since

implementation of the project would eventually require a permit from USACE under Section 404 of the federal CWA, it is expected that the lack of a federal lead agency during the NEPA/CEQA process will have minimal impact on how federal permits are eventually processed (e.g., a Section 7 consultation (via an ASIP) will still apply).

MBK is still working on the **hydraulic model**, which is also undergoing peer review. A recent memo outlined by MBK provides an update on the current status of the model, and will be sent to the NDAT for their review. When the model is operational, Aimee will ask that MBK provide both the NDAT and the NDIG with an operational demonstration. It was also pointed out that although there are significant gaps in the information that was available when the model was developed, it is structured so that information can be added as it becomes available.

Aimee presented the **revised project schedule**, which follows. Note that public scoping is dependant on completion of the hydraulic model.

Late October 2002	Hydraulic Model Calibration/Peer Review
November/December 2002	Public Scoping
December 2002	Collect Existing Conditions Information (e.g., vegetation mapping)
Summer 2003	Public Draft EIR
Spring 2004	Final EIR
Spring 2005	Design Complete
Summer 2008	Construction Complete

DWR and J&S staff met with the **Delta-Wide ERP steering committee** in late July to update them on the status of NDIP and to receive input on the development of NDIP ecosystem restoration project alternatives. The steering committee made recommendations on the project purpose and need statement, which was revised and submitted to NDAT for review, and recommended that NDIP only consider ecosystem restoration actions that occur within the footprint of the project area. The steering committee also recommended that the project team use the members of the NDAT to review proposed NDIP ecosystem restoration actions to ensure that they are consistent with the ERP as a whole. As a result, DWR intends to make recommendations first to the NDAT/ASIP committee, and subsequently to the steering committee, on what ecosystem restoration actions will be incorporated into NDIP, rather than waiting for specific guidance from the committee relative to delta-wide ERP goals. DWR and J&S intend to update the steering committee on the status of the project again sometime prior to the public scoping meetings.

II. Alternatives Development

Aimee presented a series of slides outlining the **alternative components** that are currently under development. The alternatives and components presented are considered preliminary and are based on the alternatives outlined in the 1990 EIR/EIS and input from DWR, landowners in the project vicinity, TNC, project engineers and J&S staff. It is anticipated that the operational hydraulic model will help refine and eliminate many of these alternatives, and may result in the combination of components from one or more of the preliminary options. DWR intends to ask the NDAT for additional guidance on these preliminary project alternatives once they have been run through the model and subsequently refined. The power point presentation summarizing these alternatives will be provided to the NDAT for their review.

In summary, each of the alternatives involves one or more of the following elements: (a) a whole or partial island bypass (e.g., Staten Island, Dead Horse Island, McCormick-Williamson Tract); (b) parallel or setback levees; (c) replacement or relocation of bridges in the project vicinity; and/or (d) maintenance dredging. Of note, the use of parallel levees to achieve project objectives would allow DWR to ensure that only high flows are directed into a particular area, allowing that area to be maintained for its "normal use" (e.g., agricultural production). Setback levees may limit current uses, but may offer more benefits to fish species and more opportunities for tidal marsh restoration. Specific questions that arose from the review of the alternatives included:

- (1) Part of the contract for the purchase of Staten Island includes language that the island can not be flooded at an interval greater than 1 in 10 years. What hydraulic conditions define a 1 in 10 year flood?

Answer: DWR is working to quantify this interval.

- (2) Given the fact that many of the islands lie well below sea level, how will tidal marsh habitat be established?

Answer: DWR would like to use the natural sedimentation patterns of the North and South Forks of the Mokelumne to support tidal marsh development and will specifically look to the hydraulic model and project engineers to determine where those patterns can naturally be utilized. Relocation and replacement of bridges may play into manipulating those flow patterns to benefit ecosystem restoration objectives.

- (3) Will the EIR/EIS analyze the rate at which sediment would be deposited between setback levees to determine if and how often sediment would have to be removed to maintain desired ecosystem functions?

Answer: Yes. However, under ideal circumstances, setback levees would be placed in a way that would allow sedimentation processes to achieve a sort of equilibrium (e.g., deposition during some parts of the year and scouring during others).

III. EIR/EIS outline

At the July 2, 2002 NDAT meeting, the team was given a draft version of the **EIR/EIS outline** to review. Since no comments were received from agency members, DWR and J&S intend to move forward with the existing outline. If members do have comments, please forward them to April at azohn@jsanet.com. An electronic version of the Draft EIR/EIS outline will be distributed with the meeting notes.

Action Items:

1. Provide NDAT with copy of MBK memo on the status of the hydraulic model
2. Provide NDAT with copy of power point presentation on NDIP alternatives development

Next meeting (Tuesday, November 5, 2002):

- Presentation by MBK on the hydraulic model (if complete)